



The Power of Collective Impact in Creating Regional Trails




California Trails & Greenways Conference


April 24, 2015

Rails-to-Trails Conservancy
Laura Cohen, Western Region Director

Session Overview: Speakers


- Laura Cohen, Rails-to-Trails Conservancy
 - Yves Zsutty, Trail Manager, City of San Jose Trail Program
 - Laura Thompson, Project Manager, San Francisco Bay Trail Project
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Session Overview: Content


- What is **Collective Impact**?
 - What are the **key components to successful regional trail collaborations**, and how do we overcome common challenges?
 - **“Playing well with others”**: Working across jurisdictional boundaries and across agencies;
 - **Collaboration in action**: California success stories
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Quick Poll

Any burning questions or specific topics/issues you are hoping we'll cover today?

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Presentation Overview

1. What's Collective Impact?
 2. Successful collaboration models in California
 3. New: Bay Area Trails Collaborative
 4. What are the magic ingredients of successful collaborations? What are the pitfalls?
 5. Tips for Success
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What's Collective Impact?

- Commitment of a group of actors & stakeholders from different sectors to a common agenda for solving a specific social problem
- Significant shift from paradigm of “isolated impact” – single groups acting alone and competing for funding



What's Collective Impact?



- Resources: Toolkit for working groups as they form a collective, determine strategic direction, develop implementation plans, and identify measurement indicators

<http://collectiveimpactforum.org/resources/>

Successful Models of Collective Impact in California



Bay Area Open Space Council:
network of more than 60 non-profits
and agencies dedicated to land
conservation, stewardship and
recreation

Achievements: Created Bay Area
Conservancy program, secured \$193 million
of bond funding, which supported 425
projects, including 200 miles of trails

Successful Collective Impact Efforts Outside California



- *The Circuit* is a planned 750-mile trail network connecting 2 states and 2 metro areas – Philadelphia, PA & Camden, NJ - across the Delaware River.
- \$23 million TIGER grant (2009)
- The Circuit Coalition: non-profits, govt agencies, private sector, supported by foundations, including William Penn Fdn



New: Bay Area Trails Collaborative

- Launched June 2014 by RTC
 - Purpose: **Advance completion of Bay Area trail networks** by leveraging our collective influence to **increase funding** and advance best practices and **innovative trail development strategies**.
 - Partners: Over 20 trail leaders from non-profits & agencies
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Bay Area Trails Collaborative


Early Actions:

- Shaping Active Transportation Program (ATP), California's largest trail/bike/ped funding program
- Advocating for MTC to create regional trail count program
- Innovative Public/Private Partnerships to advance trails



Tips for Success

Magic Ingredients of Successful Collaboration:


1. Common agenda and goals
 2. Shared Metrics
 3. Joint Action, Mutually Beneficial
 4. Trust and Communication
 5. Lead Organization
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Overcoming Common Challenges

Challenges:

1. Getting agreement on goals/objective
2. Sharing workload
3. Commitment and follow through
4. Trust and Communication

Solutions:

1. Inclusive goal setting process; get buy in
 2. Form action teams; if no volunteers, table the task. Start small, build on successes.
 3. Task leads; regular check-in between meetings
 4. Ask: what motivates your participation?
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“Creating a nationwide network of trails from former rail lines and connecting corridors to build healthier places for healthier people ”

- *Create trail building resources*
- *Provide technical assistance*
- *Advance bike/ped/trail policy and funding programs*
- *Create trail-user tools: TrailLink.com; guidebooks*

www.railstotrails.org